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Lucid Dreaming

Welcome, dreamer

Inside you will learn how to control your dreams. Yes, that is really possible, and everybody can learn to do it!

In dreams, things happen that don't happen in daily life. But when you dream, you are convinced that what you see is reality. When you are at work, and your boss appears to be a pink monster with tentacles, won't you at least start thinking that that is slightly strange? In real life, you would. But in a dream you don't. In a dream, everything that happens is absolutely normal. Most people are accustomed to the fact that "dreams are just dreams", and that you can't do anything about them. In fact, some people are convinced that they don't even dream.

However, it is possible to overcome that fact, to realize that your boss normally goes through life in a human form. And from there to realize that you must be dreaming. This is called lucid dreaming.

When you become lucid in a dream, you can have an interview with your pink monster, transform yourself into an animal, become invisible, fly away through a window, materialize a Ferrari in mid-air, step through a mirror or change your mother-in-law into a teddy bear. In short: you can do everything you can imagine.

You can also take advantage of your lucid dreams by confronting your fears, trying to understand your dream symbols (they are there so why not just ask them what they mean?), or ask for answers to your questions. You can use your dreams to gain knowledge about yourself and to grow spiritually.

In this dream world you will learn how to control their dreams. You can also find more background information about the phenomenon lucid dreaming.

What is lucid dreaming?

Lucid dreaming means that while you are dreaming, you are conscious of the fact that you are dreaming, rather than taking everything what happens to you for granted.

That's why it is also called 'conscious dreaming'.

Here in this section I will go deeper into the phenomenon of lucid dreaming. Has there been any scientific research done? What are sleep and dreams anyway? Has lucid dreaming been practiced for long or is this something recent? These are just some of the questions you will find answered here.

What is sleeping?

Sleep is something quite strange. People have tried to unveil the secrets of this phenomenon. Because what does happen with you while you are asleep? And why does one actually need sleep?

Research to sleeping goes on until the present day.

Some conclusions are: sleep is needed to categorize and 'digest' the stuff you did during the day. Sleep is needed to refresh your mind for the next day. In experiments where test persons were not allowed to sleep, and had to do all kinds of reaction tests (like playing some kind of racing game), it was discovered that the alertness decreased the longer one was awake. When the test person had been allowed several hours of sleep, it was found that the alertness had increased a lot.

Also there's been research to the brain activity during sleep. Your brains can be measured by measuring the 'waves' that they emit. These waves differ in frequency.

By sticking electrodes onto a sleeping test person's head it is possible to measure the brain activity. In this way, it has been discovered that sleep exists of different stages.

It starts with a kind of 'twilight zone' between waking and sleeping. Your muscles start to relax, you feel yourself **floating**, or maybe even see psychedelic images. This state is called the Hypnologic state.

After that, the first stage of sleeping begins. The brain starts to emit alpha waves.

This first stage gradually progresses into the second stage, where you are drifting off to sleep. The brain emits slow and rhythmic theta waves now. This stage can be as short as a few seconds or as long as ten minutes.

The theta waves will eventually be accompanied by quick, intense outbursts of brain-activity.

This is generally regarded as the sign that the real sleep has started. The funny thing is that if you'd be awoken from this stage, you don't have the feeling that you were asleep at all.

After about 20 minutes the third stage kicks in. You can recognize it by the big and relatively slow delta waves the brain starts emitting. This stage is when you are really deep asleep. Would you be awoken from this stage, you would feel fuzzy and disoriented, and you'd want nothing more than going back to sleep again.

Then the fourth phase begins. Your blood pressure rises, your pulse quickens, and from the waves your brain emits, one would say you were wide-awake. But that's not the case. Your body is virtually paralysed and the only thing that moves are your eyes, moving rapidly beneath your closed eyelids. This is why this stage is called Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep. People who are awoken from this stage always report they were in the middle of a dream.

So you don't dream all night, you only dream during REM-sleep. The first REM-period usually lasts for about 10 minutes. After that, you will be almost awake, before the next sleep cycle starts. You will go into stage 2 again, and from there to stage three, and to REM-sleep again to dream.

The sleep cycle differs for every person. Usually a complete cycle lasts for about 90 minutes. This comes down to about 4 or 5 cycles a night.

With every 90 minutes the duration of the REM-sleep increases. In the last two hours of sleep the REM-stage can be as long as 1 hour, which means that on

average 20 percent of your sleep consists of dreams. And that means you spend about 5 years of your life dreaming...

What is dreaming?

The dream world is **elusive**. How often didn't I take pictures in my dream, hoping that upon awakening my dream was somehow saved? Wouldn't it be marvellous to have a machine that could make one's dreams visible? Because dreams are an individual experience. You can talk about your dreams, you can write them down, or draw them, but you are the only one that was truly there.

Some dream in colour, smell, sound and taste. Others in black and white. But there are also people that don't dream at all. At least that is what they say. Because everybody dreams. Only not everybody remembers them.

There are many theories that explain what a dream is. Here I will mention some, without telling you 'this is true'. The one that feels true for you is true.

Sceptic

Sceptics say dreams are random impulses of the unconscious, which mean nothing at all. Your brain is, while you are sleeping, busy categorizing the previous day. All information transmitted in your brain is weaved into a dream.

Psychological

Your dreams are some kind of safety outlet for your unconscious. All things you can't say or do during the day, you can express in a dream. Your dreams help to lessen the pressure on your unconscious. Because the real thing would be too shocking, dreams are masked in symbols, that you have to decipher in order to understand the true meaning.

Scientific

Dreams are made of randomly fired neurons. This is the conclusion of Drs. Allen Hobson and Robert McCauley. In your brainstem some kind of 'dream generator' is localized, which is activated while in REM-sleep. Your Forebrain is then bombarded with partially random impulses. Your brain tries to make sense of all this and the result is a dream.

Spiritual

In dreams you can receive messages from your unconscious. You can see dreams as 'unopened letters from God'.

By analysing your dreams you can find out their meaning and thus gain insight into yourself.

Personal vision

I see dreams as another **reality** in which other rules apply. In your dreams you are closer to your real Self, (Soul, Higher Self, God, the Universe...). Actually the life on earth is the dream, and in your dreams you can return to the source of all things. This is why it is easier in dreams to for example receive messages from deceased loved ones, or get in touch with your spiritual guide or angel.

I compare (lucid) dreams to a kind of ultimate trance.

What is Lucidity?

The Dutch poet and writer Frederick van Eeden was besides writing, also engaged with his dreams. He was the first to use the term "lucid dreaming".

When you are dreaming, you take everything that happens for granted. It seems

that your critical, rational side is absent. The **strangest things** happen, and yet it is absolutely normal. In a lucid dream you don't take that anymore. You are conscious of your environment, and of the fact that everything that happens is not real. In other words: you dream consciously.

However, conscious is a big word. It doesn't mean you can control everything you want, or have some kind of double life in the dream world.

There are several "gradations" of consciousness in a lucid dream:

Pre-lucid

You have a nagging feeling that something is not right, but you can't put your finger on it. When you wake up, you realise: "Of course something wasn't right, I was dreaming! How couldn't I see?"

Low lucidity

For a brief period you are conscious of the fact that you are dreaming ("Hey, I'm dreaming, aren't I?"), but you can't hold on to that thought. Before you know it you go with the flow of the dream again.

High Lucidity

You are conscious of the fact that everything that happens is a dream and, that there is no real danger, and your body is safely asleep in bed.

Everything is very bright and **clear**. Colours are more intense, smells smell better, and it seems you can look infinitely far.

High lucidity will give you an enormous kick.

Absolute lucidity

From the moment you fall asleep you know you are dreaming and you have everything under control. Rather than becoming conscious while dreaming, you go into the dream state consciously.

History

Lucid dreaming is slowly gaining popularity in the western world. It is, however, an art that has been practised for centuries. Ancient tribes used lucid dreaming as an aid to contact their ancestors, get answers to questions, or receive healing. The official lucid dreamer of the tribe usually was the shaman, who could visit the **realm** of the spirits, receive healing powers and gain insights for himself and his people.

The Aboriginals (the original inhabitants of Australia) are probably the oldest known lucid dreamers. Their history goes back to 40.000 years from now. Aboriginals travel through the Dreamtime, to find answers to their questions. The Dreamtime can be described as a state of consciousness whereto the dreamer can travel. Here he can contact the spirits of the ancestors, they who created the world. The typical Aboriginal art with collared dots and stripes is a way to visualise the Dreamtime.

The Tibetan Yogis trained themselves to dream consciously, with the ultimate goal to awake from the dream we call reality. They believed that when the body dies, the soul comes into a state that is like the dream state. When you are conscious of that, you can escape from the cycle of rebirth. The Tibetan Book of the Death is written in the flourishing period of this culture.

A people whose life revolved around dreams are the Senoi, a Malaysian tribe, who, before the start of World War II, had a blooming dream-culture.

Unfortunately they have lost their ancient way of living when they encountered the communists in WW2.

The Senoi believed the dream world was connected to the spirit world. Every dream was important to them. Senoi where thought since a young age to conquer and transform danger in their dreams

There is a lot more to tell about shamans, yogis and the Senoi. If you are interested in this subject, jump to the books section or the links section, where you can find more information. One book worth mentioning is "Creative Dreaming" from P. Garfield. She writes about the Senoi and describes the Senoi dream technique in a way for you to apply it to your own dreams.

This Century

The Western world discovered lucid dreaming in the past 100 years. In 1913 The Dutch writer and poet **Frederick van Eeden** presented his **paper** to the *British Society for Psychical Research* in which he described more than 350 of his own lucid dreams, written down in a period of 14 years. He is the one that first used the term "lucid dreams".

50 years before that, Marquis d'Hervey de Saint Denis had preceded him. He described his lucid experiences in a book titled *Dreams and how to guide them*. He writes how in a period of 20 years he had learned to recall his dreams and how he was able to awake within his dreams to control them. The scientific community of his age wasn't very enthusiastic about it and his work was dismissed sceptically.

It was not until the seventies when lucid dreaming became really known and popular. The American Psychologist Patricia Garfield published her book "Creative Dreaming" in 1974. In this book she describes among other types of dreams, lucid dreams. The book was a big hit, and is being published until now. However, many didn't believe the chapter about lucid dreaming.

In that time, sleep and dream researchers didn't believe it was possible to sleep and at the same time be conscious while dreaming. Lucid dreams where dismissed as fantasy, or 'micro awakenings' where you think you are sleeping, but in fact are awake for a very brief period.

Stephen LaBerge has changed their minds. He has conducted scientific research to lucid dreams. He developed a method to prove lucidity in laboratory conditions. He himself was his first test case. In a lucid dream he tracked his dream finger with his eyes moving his slowly and deliberately up and down. The pattern he made with his eyes appeared to be clearly visible on the output of the measuring instruments.

LaBerge had scientifically proved lucidity.

From his experiment he found that lucid dreams take place in REM-slaap, just like 'common' dreams.

LaBerge has done several experiments on lucid dreaming using the eye-movement signalling method, demonstrating interesting connections between dreamed actions and physiological responses. A few examples can be found in the research section.

Stephen LaBerge is founder of the **Lucidity Institute**. On their site you can also find elaborate information about lucid dreaming experiments and research.

Research

Below are descriptions of some lucid dream related experiments. There is also a detailed list of research papers available [here](#).

When do Lucid Dreams occur?

Lucid dreams have been frequently reported to occur most commonly late in the sleep cycle. LaBerge tested this hypothesis by first determining for each of their 12 subjects the time of night, which divided their total REM time into two equal parts. All but one of the subjects had more lucid dreams in the second half of their REM time than in the first half.

How long do dreams take?

Subjects were asked to estimate ten second intervals (by counting, *one thousand and one, one thousand and two, etc.*) during their lucid dreams. Signals marking the beginning and end of the subjective intervals allowed comparison with objective time. In all cases, time estimates during the lucid dreams were very close to the actual time between signals!

Finger tracking

Two subjects tracked the tip of their fingers moving slowly left to right during four conditions:

- 1) awake, eyes open
 - 2) awake, eyes closed (mental imagery)
 - 3) **lucid** dreaming
 - 4) imagination ("dream eyes closed") during lucid dreaming.
- The subjects showed saccadic eye movements in the two imagination conditions and smooth tracking eye movements during dreamed or actual tracking.

Breathtaking experiments Three lucid dreamers were asked to either breathe rapidly or to hold their breath in their lucid dreams. The subjects reported successfully carrying out the agreed-upon tasks a total of nine times, and in every case, a judge was able to correctly predict on the basis of the polygraph recordings which of the two patterns had been executed.

More experiments and results can be found at the [Lucidity Institute](#).

Before you start...

Before you can try to have a lucid dream, the most important thing is to remember your dreams.

How else would you know if you had a lucid dream if you don't remember your dreams?

To remember your dreams,
keeping a dream journal is very helpful.

In this section you will find tips on how to keep your dream diary.

I have also included some dream work questions, which can help you unravel the meaning of your (non lucid) dreams.

When you start to try to have lucid dreams, there are some things you can run into that can be very frightening or disorienting. To ease your fears, read "Signs".

Once you remember at least one dream a night you are ready to try to have a

lucid dream...

Good luck!

Remembering dreams

Before you can have a lucid dream, you'll have to remember your dreams. How else would you know you had a lucid dream when you wake up?

If you are somebody who wakes up and can write whole books of their dreams, you can skip this part. However, are you someone who can only remember dreams sporadically, or you can just remember some dreams from your childhood and you have the feeling you don't dream anymore, then read on.

One of the most important things is to not want it too much. When you are trying to force yourself to remember a dream, it won't work. Try to let it come naturally. Practice makes perfect. When you are consciously intending to remember your dreams, your subconscious will pick this up and you will notice that you will remember more and more of your dreams. In the beginning it may be just a fragment, or a feeling. But it will develop into complete dream scenarios. Be **patient** and persevere.

The following exercise you can do while you are in bed, ready to go to sleep. You can adapt it to your own insights, what's important is that you feel good doing it, and the things you say to yourself sound right.

To start you are going to clean your head a bit of everything that happened during the day. Relax and go with your attention to the centre of your head. This is the point between your ears, behind your eyes. Feel how you are in the centre of your head. Now visualise a big vacuum cleaner that cleans the inside of your head.

Feel how you breathe. Breath in and out. Breathe in and tense the muscles of your feet. Breath out and relax the muscles of your feet. Breath in and tens the muscles in your lower legs. Breath out and relax them again. Go on until you have come to your head.

When you feel completely relaxed say to yourself: "I'm going to sleep now, and I'm going to dream. When I wake up I remember my dream"

You can also ask for help. Ask your subconscious, your Higher Self, God, the Universe, your spirit guide, or whoever you want. Make contact with the one you ask for help and ask him/her to help you remembering your dream.

Now visualise how you wake up and write down your dreams in your dream diary, or record them otherwise.

Keep repeating your intention to remember your dream until you fall asleep.

You can also take a glass of **water**, and consciously drink half of it. While you drink you tell yourself that you are going to dream and remember your dream. Then visualise how you wake up, drink the rest of the water, and remember your dream. When you awake, you empty the glass and if everything goes well, your subconscious will be triggered to let your dream surface.

When you succeed in remembering at least one dream every night, you are ready to try to become lucid.

Dream diary

The best thing you can do when you start to work seriously with your dreams is to keep a **dream diary**.

This will help you remember your dreams better (you have a reason to remember them if you want to write them down).

Instead of pen and paper you can also use a dictaphone. Talking is faster than writing. An advantage is also that you can stay with your head in the dream world while dictating your dream.

I prefer typing my dream directly into the computer.

In 'tips' you find some suggestions for writing down your dreams.

A dream journal also gives you insight in your **dream world**. I have been keeping dream diaries for 3 years and it is amazing to read what I dreamt of. Some dreams I can remember but others sound so strange to me I can't believe I dreamt that.

If you consequently write down at least one dream a night, you will begin to recognize your own unique dream themes. Once you have found such a theme, you can use that to become lucid.

For example, I used to unplug the telephone when I went to sleep because I didn't want to be woken up by somebody who calls me in the middle of the night. However I had dreams in which my telephone rang and I answered it. I realized this was impossible since the telephone couldn't ring in 'real life' so I knew I was dreaming.

Tips

Here are some tips to help you keep your dream diary.

Choose a special pen you'll only use for writing down your dreams. This will make your dream writing some sort of ritual.

Consciously decide that the journal is the place where you will be recollecting your experiences in the dream world.

Keep your dream diary right next to your bed so you can **write down** your dreams directly when you have awoken.

When you awake, don't stand up immediately, but keep the position you awoke in. Let your mind wander back to your dream. Let the memory come to you. Don't force yourself to remember it won't work.

Write down everything you can remember... feelings, **colours**, even songs.

Give every dream a title and don't forget to put the date in as well. Dream titles help you to remember what the dream was about when you go through your diary.

Some people make whole lists of symbols they encounter in their dreams, along with the meaning it has for them.

Don't wait until morning to take notes on dreams recalled in the middle of the night. No matter how clear they are at the time, they will have disappeared entirely from your memory by the time you get up in the morning.

Instead of writing by hand you can also use your computer since there is software available to keep an electronic diary. **Alchera** is one such program.

Dream Themes

When you write down your dreams for a period of time, you will start to recognize recurring dream themes. These are your personal themes. As soon as you have found one, you can learn to recognize it while dreaming and thus become **lucid**.

This is how to do it: When you have chosen your theme (for example, doing your driving exam, while in real life, you already have your drivers licence) you memorize that when you are doing a driving exam, you are dreaming. You can use the MILD method for this, as described in 'how'.

Everybody is different, so everybody has different dream signs. However, there are some 'common' dream signs. I will mention some here, without interpreting them.

You can add your own themes to this list as you write down more and more dreams in your dream diary.

Unstable 'point of view'

Sometimes your 'point of view' changes during your dream. For example: you are running through a street; you see yourself from above, running, and the next moment you are there, running. This has an interesting counterpart; you can dream you see somebody doing something and the next moment you are that person. Another sub-rule extracted from this is the fact that you can watch something and then become emerged in it. For example: You watch TV and the next moment you are in that environment; or you read a comic and become emerged in the story.

False awakenings.

This is when you are convinced you are awake. Sometimes you even start your morning ritual, only to discover that this was still a dream when you really wake up. This can be very annoying.

Miraculous flight.

You can find yourself suddenly be flying, or wanting to fly. I had a dream in which I was walking in the street and had an incredible urge to take off and fly away. I thought to myself: "I can't fly because I'm not dreaming and I will fall on my face." But eventually I tried and I flew. I then knew I was dreaming.

Malfunctioning devices.

Your telephone won't work, you have trouble turning on your computer, the TV is broken, etc.

Meeting deceased people. If you find yourself having tea with a long lost relative it's surely a sign you are dreaming.

Being chased

This one happens to a lot of people. Remember to turn around and look at your **chaser** the next time you dream this.

Your teeth falling out.

A very common dream sign. A variation on this theme is loose teeth.

Bathroom trouble

Bathrooms in dreams are of un-findable, or extremely dirty, or have a tremendous lack of privacy.

Different houses

In dreams your house never looks the way like it does in real life. Or you find yourself in houses or rooms where you used to live.

Not being able to run fast.

You have to get away fast, but you can only **run** in slow motion. Or your feet are stuck to the ground.

Light switches don't work.

Try it, they really don't!

This one can also be used as a **reality test**.

Screaming without a voice

You want to scream but your voice is gone or barely hearable.

Perpetual falling

If you notice this one, try to change from falling into flying

Being late

A common dream sign. You miss your train or bus, or are afraid you are late for an appointment.

Having exams

You have a very important exam but you don't know any of the questions. You haven't studied or anything.

This one is a trigger for lucidity for me. Lately I have much of those exam dreams, or dreams that I'm back in high school. When I have those dreams, I remember that I don't have to do any exams anymore because I have finished school a long time ago. Then I realize I'm dreaming. Sometimes I don't and I have constantly a nagging feeling that I already have graduated and I keep wondering why I'm doing the exam.

Being naked

Suddenly you realize you are naked, or 'essential parts' of your body are uncovered, and everybody is looking at you. You spend the rest of the dream searching for clothes...

Reality Check

When you start trying to have lucid dreams, you will find yourself sometimes wondering whether you are really dreaming or not. To answer that question a **reality test** is an excellent way.

There are many ways to test your Reality. One thing you must keep in mind is that **whenever you are not sure whether you are dreaming or not you are probably dreaming!**

Here are several reality tests you can use:

Try to switch on the light

A light switch won't work in a dream. Really. There's even been research done to it, and none of the test persons was able to switch the light on in a normal way. I've tried it several times and the light just doesn't work.

Read something

In a dream, text will never stay the same. If you read something, look away and read it again, you will see that the text has changed. Try to memorize the text you read, that is very difficult in a dream.

The interesting thing with reading in a dream is that when you purposely read a text over and over you will see that the letters change with every time you read it.

Some people claim it is impossible to read in a dream, but that is not true since other people (me too) have had dreams in which they were reading books or signs. It isn't the reading, but the remembering of the text that is almost impossible to do.

Look at the time

The time will change. Clocks never tell the time right. Sometimes they will not even tell the time. The clock may have no hands for example. Digital clocks will have too much numbers or strange symbols on them.

Look at your watch what time it is. Look away and look again. The time will have changed. Try to make them change while watching them. If they change, you are surely dreaming.

Try to fly

Go on, just try it. Lift off the ground and let yourself float. If you can **take off** you must be dreaming.

Through the mirror...

This one is my favourite. Try to stick your finger through a mirror, the window, or a wall. It gives a very strange tinkling feeling in your finger when it works as well as the uttermost conviction that you are dreaming. And after that, just step through and see where you end up...

Signs

When you are starting on your road to lucidity you can encounter strange things in your dream. These are the signs of nearing lucidity. Before you have your first lucid dream you will probably experience some of the phenomena mentioned below. But also when you haven't ever had a lucid dream some things can sound familiar.

Here are some of these signs, so you can prepare yourself a little.

Some things mentioned can be very frightening or disorienting. When you are overcome by fear, know that you can **wake up at any time**.

Feeling paralysed

I put this one on the top because it can be one of the most frightening things. You think you are awake, you lie in bed and somebody dark and scary approaches. You can't move, can't scream, nothing. You are very frightened. This is the so called 'Old hag syndrome'. It is the classical nightmare, which already was described in the middle ages (demons that come you in the night).

There is also a less frightening variation, in which you 'merely' feel you cannot move.

When you encounter the scary version, try to realise you are dreaming and tell

the demon it's not welcome. (or use another method, described in '**nightmares**').

Here is a very useful link with a lot of information about sleep paralysis (thanks to David P for posting it in the forum): **Sleep paralysis and lucid dreaming**

False awakening

this is something common. You think you are awake, when you are in fact sleeping. You will awake shortly after your false awakening. Sometimes you can have more false awakenings before you finally have the real one. It can be very frustrating.

Falling sensation

Sometimes you can have the feeling you have fallen with an enormous impact, which shook you awake. This is because your astral body has been pulled to your 'real life' body very fast. Nothing to worry about.

Strange sounds

Especially when you are in that twilight zone between waking and sleeping, you can hear strange noises like swishing, zooming or wrinkling. These are phenomena related to an out of body experience (OOBE). When you are about to leave your body you can hear these sounds.

Feeling of movement

Together with the sounds above, you can also have the feeling that you are going to a tunnel really fast. Another one is feeling yourself twirl around your axis or feel a kind of rocking movement. These are also signs of an **OOBE**. Sometimes I have the feeling I can fall out of bed. I will just 'tumble' out of my bed, while in fact I'm still in it. What I do after that is flying through the window (after a reality-test of course) or stepping through a mirror.

Talking about dreams

You will have dreams in which you are talking about dreams, writing down dreams, telling somebody about your dream, etc. This is a sign that lucidity is coming very close. In due time you will make the step to 'Hey! But I'm dreaming now!'

Example: I dreamt I was in a room with beautiful paintings. I said to somebody: "Wow, they look just like paintings I see in my dreams." ...silence... "Wait a minute, I **am** dreaming!"

Analyse your dream

If you want to discover for yourself what your dreams tell you, try the techniques described below. They are meant to be practised after you have written down your dream so you can analyse it. But of course, when you are lucid, you can use them while you are still in the dream!

The techniques are developed by Pamela Ryan.

Recognize repetition

Look for patterns and recurring themes. If you don't "get it" the first time, your brain often sends you the same dream-message again. Many people experience recurring dreams, or even recurring nightmares. That's just your brain, trying to get your attention and convey an important message to you!

Be everyone

View each character as an aspect of yourself. For example, if there is a devil in the dream, see what happens if you view that character as "the

devilish/destructive part of myself". Even if the character is someone you know in real life try using this technique. Instead of your mother, maybe the character represents the motherly part of you, or a part of you that is like your actual mother.

Explain your dream simply

Explain your dream in the simplest, most basic terms possible. Pretend that you are explaining it to a Martian, who needs you to define almost every word. So for example, if your dream involved a car, imagine that a Martian doesn't understand what a "car" is. You must explain that a car is a device you use for transportation -- to get from one place to another, to move forward. You may be surprised by the meanings that are revealed!

Role-playing

Some people find it helpful to imagine that they have returned to the dream, and then they engage dream characters in imaginary conversations. So if you dreamed about a mysterious **shadowed figure**, you might question the figure, asking, "Who are you?" ... "Why do you hide yourself from me?" ... "Why have you come to me?"

And when you are lucid you can just ask them in the dream!

Consult a dream dictionary

(But be very sceptical).

There are many such dictionaries. Sometimes, the listings can provide you with insights. Other times, the suggestions are pretty silly. Only accept an interpretation if it "clicks" and feels right to you. (I steer toward dictionaries with interpretations based on psychology, rather than on magical meanings.)

Share your dreams with others

Get their input. Again, do not accept friends' interpretations unless they feel right to you, giving you an "aha!" feeling of recognition.

Dream work Questions:

This list of questions is adapted from two sources: The Jungian-Senoi Dream work Manual by Strephon Kaplan-Williams (where you will find a much longer, more extensive list of such questions) and a *Dream Journal Form* (author unknown). I've adapted it a little.

What am I doing?

How am I, the dream ego, acting in this dream? (aggressive, assertive, passive, active, etc...)

How do I feel?

What are the various feelings and **emotions** in the dream? (both mine and those of other characters...)

What is the context?

What is the context of my dream?

What is going on in my life right now?

Who are the main characters?

In the dream, who are the main characters?

Who/what is the adversary?

Who/what is being wounded?

Who/what is being healed?

Who/what) is my companion?
 Did I dream of actual people, or imaginary people?
 Could the characters all be different aspects of myself?

Which are important symbols?

What are the outstanding features or symbols in the dream? (For example: flood, animals, house, etc.) How might these features relate to my emotions, my personality, or me?

How does it relate to me?

How does the dream as a whole relate to my personality?

What are the actions?

What are the main actions and who is performing them?

What am I avoiding?

What would I like to avoid in the dream?

What does it mean for me?

What does the dream want from me? What actions might it be suggesting that I consider?

Are any memories triggered?

Does the dream trigger any memories? Do any of the elements of the dream relate to my past? Why might this part of my past be called to my attention now?

Do I have questions?

Does the dream trigger any further questions? What are the answers?

Why did I dream this?

Why did I need this dream? What is its positive message for me?

How to become lucid

Are you inspired, and want to try to have a lucid dream yourself?

There are many ways to have lucid dreams. Some people can do it naturally; other people have to try very hard to accomplish the lucid state.

However,

Everybody can do it!

In this section I've listed some methods you can use. Everybody is different, so choose a method that appeals to you.

It is advisable that you don't lead a stressful life. You must have the time for yourself and for your dreams.

I recommend you to start the exercises in a quiet period. Maybe in your vacation.

Also, take your time. Maybe it doesn't work the first time. Or the second. Or the third. Maybe you will get your first lucid dream the 35th try. Don't give up. Be patient.

Once you have had your first lucid dream you will see that the next ones are easier and sometimes you will become lucid completely by surprise.

Inducing a Dream

Inducing is like self-hypnosis. By means of suggestion you can become lucid. This method is familiar under the name MILD. And is developed by S. LaBerge. I've adapted it a little.

MILD stands for *Mnemonic Induced Lucid Dream*.

Beside MILD there is WILD (*Wake Induced Lucid Dream*), and other varieties, which end on ILD.

Here I will talk about MILD.

MILD

This method works best when you have just awoken from an ordinary dream and you go back to sleep.

Lie down and relax. Now intend to have a lucid dream.

Focus on the spot between your eyes on your forehead and repeat the following text, or one you write yourself:

I'm going to dream now. I'm in a dream. I'm aware of my dream.

If you find your thoughts wandering, bring them back softly, and keep repeating the words.

Now imagine yourself becoming lucid.

See yourself realising you are dreaming.

Visualise what you are going to do in your lucid dream. (for example flying)

Repeat this until you fall asleep.

It is important to not **want** it too much. Try to let it come to you. If it won't work today, it will another time. Be patient.

Tips & Tricks

Here are some inspiring instructions. When you are starting to wonder whether or not you are dreaming, do a reality-check as described in **starting**.

Look at your hands

During the day, look consciously at your **hands** and ask yourself: "Am I dreaming?" When you do this often enough you will eventually look at your hands in your dream too. Automatically you will ask yourself if you are dreaming...

How did I get here?

During the day, ask yourself often: "How did I get here?" Then retrace your steps in your thoughts.

If you do this often enough, you will eventually ask yourself this in a dream. And then you really don't know how you got there. Now you know you are dreaming.

Drink a lot

Before going to bed, drink some glasses of **water**. Now you will have to go to the

bathroom somewhere in the middle of the night.

Lie down, close your eyes and concentrate. Tell yourself that whenever you are in a bathroom or looking for one you are dreaming.

Almost definitely you will have a dream in which you want to go to the bathroom. Now you can become lucid!

Unfortunately, nature keeps calling, and eventually you'll wake up. But at least you were lucid...

warning:

It can appear so real that you may wet your bed...

Wake up early

Set your alarm clock a few hours earlier (I know, it is difficult, but this method is worth it). When you wake up, read something about lucid dreams so you will have your head completely filled with the subject. Surfing lucid dreaming sites for an hour or so does miracles too. Do this until the only thing you can think about is lucid dreaming.

Lights off, close your eyes... and chances are you will become lucid.

Lucid nutrition

There is lucid food around. It varies from mustard and pickles to lettuce and popcorn. I will mention a couple of things here. Eat or drink it about half an hour before going to sleep. Why it works hasn't been scientifically proved (yet). They have been forwarded by posters in alt.dreams.lucid, or have been mailed to me. Remember that this 'dream diet' doesn't have to work for everybody. And don't try everything at once....

- ✦ Milk and dairy products
- ✦ Pickles and mustard
- ✦ Fresh fruit juice
- ✦ Lettuce
- ✦ Popcorn
- ✦ Fish
- ✦ Ice-cream

Watch a movie

Watch a movie before going to sleep. Choose one, which you know, will never happen to you, like the Sixth Sense. The Matrix is also a cool one to have lucid dreams on.

When you are going to sleep, you will hopefully dream about the movie, that you are playing in it or something similar. Now you can realise you are dreaming.

Tip: After the movie, when you are going to sleep, let it play back in your mind, while telling yourself you are dreaming.

Learn yourself lucid

Research has proven that you digest the things you have learned during the day in your dreams. Hence this tip. Immerse yourself completely in lucid dreams. Read books, write stories, surf websites. Learn techniques by heart.

While sleeping, all this information will sink in and most likely something of it will appear in your dreams.

For that matter, it is generally a good idea to have your mind on dreams or lucid dreams. In one way or another it triggers your subconscious to be alert for dreams. The proof: whenever I've worked a lot on this site, my lucid dreams increase.

Staying lucid

Once you realize you are dreaming, it is sometimes difficult to remain lucid, or even to remain dreaming. Here are some techniques to keep you dreaming:

remain calm

Stay **calm**. Don't get too excited. If you do, chances are you will wake up after the immediate realisation that you are dreaming.

spinning

Twirl around your own axis (you won't get dizzy) and say to yourself: "The next scene will be a dream."

look at your hands.

Focus at a stable reference point in the dream, like your **hands** or the ground. This helps you stabilize yourself in the dream.

rub your hands together

The rubbing will give you a vivid sense of movement and friction. While rubbing your hands repeat to yourself: The next scene will be a dream.

According to **research** the spinning technique is the most efficient, followed by the rubbing-hands technique.

Take off!

After all the preparations, it is finally time for the take off!

Here you will find suggestions for things to do while lucid. From fun to spiritual. From flying to confronting nightmares.

But really, that's not all you can do. Your imagination is the limit!

Maybe you do even wilder things in your lucid dreams.

Mail me your favourite lucid dreaming pastime and maybe I will add it to the site.

Also, feel free to share your nightly adventures in the **forum**.

Have fun going lucid!

Conquer your nightmares

If you have **nightmares** you can overcome them through lucid dreaming. If you realise you are dreaming, you know you have nothing to fear.

The best thing to do is to **confront** your enemy. If something is chasing you, turn around and look at it. Sometimes this is enough and the scary thing turns out to be nothing to be afraid of at all.

When the enemy is still hostile, ask him what he thinks is doing in your dream and defeat it.

If the enemy is defeated, demand a **gift**. The purpose of the gift is to transform the negative into something positive. You will always get a gift. These gifts are really amazing and give you a very powerful feeling. Once I got a gift of really

beautiful music, and I could still hear it when I woke up...

If you use this technique in a nightmare it won't haunt you again.

Once, I had a dream in which a German soldier from WWII was coming after me to make me prisoner or something. I ran down a bridge and hid myself in a corner.

Then I realized I was dreaming.

"I want to know who that is that is after me, and why he's doing it," I said to myself.

I yelled: "Here I am, come and catch me!"

There he came. But the mean-looking soldier had transformed in a small childlike woman.

I asked: "Who are you?" and she replied: "I'm your fear for the unknown."

This was a very emotional moment in the dream and crying, I hugged her.

I realized that my "fear for the unknown" had made me "run away" in real life situations.

Explore your dream

One of the coolest things you can do is **exploring** your dream world.

Dream Discovery

When you are lucid, there is no need to 'go with the flow' of the dream anymore. Look around you on the spot you became lucid. Follow paths, enter buildings, talk to **characters** you encounter.

Ask for example who they are, and whether they know they are in your dream...

Look up...

Don't forget to look at the **sky**. Dream skies are breathtakingly beautiful with marvellous colours or enormous planets.

Understand symbols

Instead of deciphering your dream when you have already had it, you can do it right away in a lucid dream. Maybe you have a recurring dream symbol, which you want to know the meaning of. In a lucid dream you can call for it to appear and ask it what it represents.

Flying

Flying is something almost anybody does in a dream. Flying in a lucid dream is even better because you are so much more aware of the experience.

There are several flying techniques. When I was a child I used to make a swimming motion in the air. This didn't really go fast but that was all I could. I only came about a metre above ground level so walking would have been faster.

I remember dreams in which I searched for high buildings to use for take off, but I would always take a swoop and end up about a metre above the floor.

But gradually I gained height and also used different techniques. I like the Superman style best. Imagine an energy coming from under your feet that pushes you upwards and onwards. You can really go fast with this one.

And of course there is always the good old flap-your-arms-technique. This one is quite slow in my experience. Better than air swimming though...

Everybody has his own flying technique. Some people 'sit' in the air and fly around like that.
Someone mailed me that he flies on 'ether'. He imagines there to be flows of 'ether' in the sky on which he floats.

The weirdest technique I've used is one I did when I was hooked to a videogame in which you are a squirrel that can fly when you run and then jump in the air. I actually did that in my dream. I ran, jumped, and indeed I flew.

Fun things to do

There are so much fun things you can do in a lucid dream. Imagine yourself to be in some kind of spiritual virtual reality where everything is possible...

Transforming

Try to transform yourself into an animal, such as a **dolphin**, a dragon or an eagle.

It is very strange to actually feel yourself be another shape.

Become Invisible

Something I like to do is become invisible and then pinch the people in my dream.

Step through a mirror

Of course this is the best one... Step through a mirror and see where you end up. I've been to the strangest dream worlds.

Do some magic

A fun thing is to do some magic. And do it with class. If you have read the Harry Potter books you know what I mean.

Teleportation

Instead of flying, try to teleport yourself to the place you want to be.

Go creating

Why don't you try to create something out of nothing?

Holodeck

Somebody mailed me he loves to play 'holodeck' in his lucid dreams, just like in Star trek. He starts with the black background with the yellow squares and from there he calls forth his desired environment.

Showing off

It is really fun to show off in your dreams and amaze your dream friends. Like stepping through a wall or taking off flying while exclaiming: "Look what I can do!"

Spiritual

Lucid dreams are a kind of ultimate **meditation** in which you can do everything you also do while meditating. I used to search for the Light. These were very intense dreams.

Since I follow a course on intuitive development I sometimes do the meditations I did in school in my lucid dreams. For example we did a meditation in which you discover your Inner Sanctuary. In my first lucid dream after that I decided to visit

my Sanctuary. And I really was there, from top to toe.

Discover a past live

Do you believe in reincarnation? You can use your lucid dreams to catch glimpses of past lives. Or even experience a past live in detail.

Before you go to sleep determine to have a lucid dream. Say to yourself that when you have a lucid dream you would like to see a past life.

Now when you know you are dreaming you will remember your intent and search for a past life.

Ideas to inspire you:

- ♦ Materialise a door in your dream and say to yourself that when you step through it you will find yourself in a past live.
- ♦ Imagine a TV, which you turn on. On the screen you will see yourself in a past live.
- ♦ Imagine a gallery with paintings on the wall. Every painting is an image of a past live. Walk towards a painting and watch the life unfold itself.

Contact your Spirit Guide

Try to contact your spirit guide. Everybody has one or more. Your guide is somebody from a higher plane who lovingly guides you. You can learn to know him or her in a lucid dream. I have encountered several guides of mine, but the first time is still engraved in my memory:

I know I'm lucid and think what shall I ask for. Everything is black now... oh yeah meeting my guide. I call/say "Do I have a guide? Can I see you?" Or something like that.

I'm now in the living room from my childhood home. On the couch are 4 women.

"Are you my guides?"

"No, not us (...) your real guide isn't here yet."

I walk out into the garden, to the lawn, in the meantime asking: "Can I see you? I would really like to see you."

Then I see somebody. She wears a kind of jute orange dress. She has blue big beaded necklaces around her neck. Her hair is short and blond. Her age is about 40 or 50? She looks Dutch.

"So you are my guide?"

"Yes."

"What's your name?"

"Annette."

I taste the name. Annette.

(...)

Ik ask: "Are you with me in a dream or am I with you in a..." (I can't remember the word).

She supplies: "Spiritual plane" (astral reality, something like that)

"So I'm actually out of my body now?"

"Yes... don't you worry how to get back?" (something like that)

I, smiling: "No, I only have to think of my body and I'm already there. I'm almost awake now anyway, and then I'm back in my body right away."

And indeed I wake up...

Later I called her again in a lucid dream, because I wanted very much to paint her. I saw her and I only looked, looked, looked at her. When I woke up I **painted** her. She looked different than the first time I met her.

Out-of-body

You have two bodies. An earthbound body and an astral body. These two normally stay together but it is possible to consciously separate your astral **body** from your earthbound body. This is called *astral projection* or an *out of body experience (OOBE)*

I think this has happened to me although I'm not sure of it. I think that a "real" OOB means that your environment is the same as when you are not out of your body. When I stand next to (or float above) my bed and sometimes see my body in it, my room doesn't look the way it should and neither does the environment. There are gardens where there should be houses, and so on.

In a lucid dream you can try to have an OOB. Sometimes it is quite scary and you don't succeed because you are too frightened. But sometimes you really end up in the most amazing worlds.

When you try to leave your body there are several signs that you are succeeding. A humming or a high-pitched noise in your ears, the feeling that you are being pulled, or a feeling of total paralysis.

The moment I leave my body (or at least I think I do) I hear a noise that is best described as "*snok*". I then have the feeling I'm suddenly cut loose of something.

I used to practice lucid dreaming quite intensely and in that time I often found myself half awake with the feeling of spinning around my axis really fast. Or sometimes I felt myself speeding through a tunnel.

I have several astral projection methods in a dream. (It sounds like I do this daily but in fact I rarely get an OOB)

One is the fly-as-high-as-you-can-method. You try to fly really high and in the mean time say to yourself: "higher, up, out of my body". Sometimes you really feel yourself being pulled out of your body.

Another method is to imagine that you are under water and feel yourself floating to the surface.

If you are really interested in OOB's and want to know more check out **Through the Window**. On the links section are links to OOB sites too. There is also a related newsgroup: **alt.out-of-body**

[And more...](#)

Of course there are a lot more things you can do in a lucid dream:

Shared dreaming

You can try to meet somebody you know in a dream, and ask him/her later if he/she has met you too. As soon as you become lucid you try to find this person. You can also make an appointment with a fellow lucid dreamer to meet each other on a familiar place. On the **forum** there are sometimes experiments like this going on. I don't know if anyone has ever succeeded though...

Of course there are a lot of other things to do in a lucid dream. Here I mention some.

Be inspired

Let your dreams literally **inspire** you! The way this site initially looked comes actually from a lucid dream. Over time, the look has changed, but the 'feel' has stayed the same, as well as the layout in a left and right part, with on one part text and on the other images.

Here is the dream it came from:

"I'm lucid and I'm standing in a hallway with doors on both sides. I remember wanting to dream of my lucid dreaming site. So I say to myself: "Behind this door I will see what the site will look like."

I open the door and step in the room. There I find a desk with a computer sitting on it. The computer is turned on. I walk to it, and on the screen I see my site"

When I woke up from that dream, I directly started sketching what I saw and from there I developed the design of this site.

Another example comes from alt.dreams.lucid:

"My profession is that of a pastry chef. I work in major hotels where I'm in charge of deserts for often over 7,000 customers. Sometimes, I will go to sleep and be formulating a new desert or recipe. If the dream actually completes the task (recipe) once I awaken, I immediately write it down, and then scale the recipe back into a test batch. As you can imagine a recipe that might call for 60 pounds of cream cheese, could prove very expensive if it flopped. Now, what I usually find is: the dream state recipe is usually almost in perfect balance. (i.e.: when making bread, you need so much yeast for so much flour....)

But I love it when I can wake up, try something and it works just fine."